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Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2009/10

Summary

The present report provides an overview of major developments in inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) during the period leading to and covering its fall session 2009 and its spring session 2010. The report demonstrates the extent to which CEB and its three pillars, the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group, have advanced their efforts to promote a more coherent United Nations system delivering as one in response to intergovernmental mandates at the global, regional and country levels. Section II examines how CEB has actively addressed major system-wide challenges, and section III focuses on other issues taken up by the Board through its three committees and their networks. Section IV looks ahead to events that will have an impact on the agenda of the Board in the coming year.

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The global financial and economic crisis remained at the top of the CEB agenda during the reporting period. Together with the international community, the Board monitored closely the development of the crisis, its effect on society and its impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Joint Crisis Initiatives, launched by CEB in spring 2009 as an immediate response to the global financial and economic crisis, have enhanced the role of the United Nations system in dealing with the crisis and its impact on development. CEB also intensified its efforts for a coordinated and effective United Nations system delivery on climate change. Demonstrating its readiness to support Member States in implementing future agreements, the Board conveyed a joint message of the system's capacity to respond to the challenges of climate change by delivering as one on mitigation and adaptation at the global, regional and country levels. The Board has continuously underlined the need for a holistic approach to all issues of system-wide importance. Scaling up and accelerating United Nations system efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is a key part of that effort.

To strengthen the United Nations system's ability to deliver more effectively in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, the Board continues to lead efforts towards simplifying and harmonizing business practices. In addition, it has taken major steps to improve the safety and security of United Nations staff members to enable them to work effectively in situations of crises. A new package of United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidance was developed to offer United Nations country teams greater flexibility and allowing for closer alignment with national planning processes. Work continued to strengthen the resident coordinator system and implement the management and accountability system for the United Nations development system and resident coordinator system.

The Board addressed several other cross-cutting issues during the reporting period, including the United Nations system's contribution to the Economic and Social Council, system-wide coherence, collaboration with the Joint Inspection Unit, the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), science and technology, and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

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I. Introduction

1. During 2009/10, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) continued its ongoing efforts to align the strengths of the United Nations system in support of countries' efforts to deal with the challenges confronting the international community. Throughout the reporting period, CEB has played a key role in ensuring a coherent approach by the United Nations system in addressing the needs of the international community and delivering as one at the global, regional and country levels.

2. Joint United Nations system efforts over the past year have clearly demonstrated the benefits of integrating the United Nations Development Group into the CEB structure. The three committees of CEB — the High-level Committee on Management, the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group — have continued to advance close cooperation on numerous issues, ensuring a strong link between programme, policy and country-level implementation, facilitated through enhanced coherence in management practices.

3. Noteworthy advancements were the coordinated approach of the United Nations system to climate change, the implementation of nine Joint Crisis Initiatives in response to the global financial and economic crisis, progress towards enhancing harmonization and simplification of business practice in the United Nations system, and ensuring safety and security of staff worldwide. The General Assembly recognized those efforts in its resolution 63/311 on system-wide coherence, which placed considerable emphasis on the role of CEB and its three pillars in enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the United Nations system. Member States also acknowledged the joint efforts of the United Nations system at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, where organizations of the system demonstrated increased coherence and collaboration in delivering as one on the challenges of climate change.

4. The very fact that the challenges of poverty, food, energy, a global economic downturn and climate change are all interrelated has presented the international community with the complex task of tackling them in an integrated manner. CEB has cautioned of the negative impact of the financial and economic crisis on implementing the Millennium Development Goals and the threat to the development gains of the past decade. The United Nations system, through CEB, continues to act on all fronts to fight against hunger and poverty and support efforts to achieve all internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

5. While there were signs during the year that parts of the world were slowly recovering from the global financial and economic crisis, it remains clear that the crisis continues to impact most negatively on those who have least contributed to it, and who have reaped the least benefits from globalization. A number of key challenges, therefore, remain to be addressed, in particular for the poor in developing countries. Indicators such as increases in malnutrition, child poverty, rising food prices, decline in household income and constrained funding for health and education are of concern, given increasing unemployment, declining budgets and threatened services. Through the pursuit of its nine Joint Crisis Initiatives, CEB has maintained its focus on the world's most vulnerable, and has thus stressed the

need to continue to monitor and address the impact of the crisis on the lives of people.

6. The organizations of the United Nations system remain steadfast in their support of the Secretary-General in his important leadership role on these key issues. CEB has reaffirmed its strong commitment to assist Member States in striving for a development process that is more inclusive, equitable and environmentally and socially sustainable.

7. During the reporting period, the Board has produced concrete results in the transformation of United Nations management systems for improved and more flexible support to the delivery of programmatic mandates. The disastrous effects of the earthquake in Haiti and the deadly attacks against United Nations staff in Kabul, in Islamabad and other places during the year serve as reminders of the increased risks faced by United Nations staff around the world and the need for the Organization to maintain its strong focus on staff safety and security. The system coming together as "One United Nations" remains the modus operandi in these crisis situations as well, and remains an essential focus area for CEB to enable the system to deliver coherently and effectively in response to intergovernmental mandates.

8. The Board, represented by the CEB secretariat, has continued its regular and ad hoc briefings and has attempted to strengthen the substantive dialogue with Member States on its ongoing work, not least through the system-wide coherence consultations, and on the global crisis.

9. During the reporting period, the Board welcomed the appointment of several new Executive Heads: Irina Bokova, the new Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Yukiya Amano, the new Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency; and Filippo Grandi, the new Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

II. Major challenges addressed by the United Nations system in 2009/10

A. United Nations system response to the global financial and economic crisis

10. Since the unfolding of the global financial and economic crisis, CEB has taken special measures to enable a rapid United Nations system response. Starting in October 2008, the Board and the High-level Committee on Programmes initiated a review and analysis of the impact of the crisis and identified the major challenges facing the international community in meeting the needs of the world's most vulnerable. Bearing in mind the multidimensional nature of the crisis, the Board adopted nine Joint Crisis Initiatives[1] in the first months of 2009. The Initiatives

[1] The nine Joint Crisis Initiatives are: (a) additional financing for the most vulnerable; (b) food security; (c) trade; (d) green economy initiative; (e) global jobs pact; (f) social protection floor; (g) humanitarian action, security and social stability; (h) technology and innovation; (i) monitoring and analysis.

served as a coordinated system-wide operational response to support Member States' efforts to address the crisis. The initiatives constitute a comprehensive strategy to rally the knowledge, experience, strengths and capacities of the entire system in support of a holistic response to the crisis globally, regionally and nationally.

11. The Joint Crisis Initiatives also form an organizing framework for a system-wide response in support of the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held from 24 to 26 June 2009 in New York. To assist Member States in their preparations for this event, on 18 June 2009, CEB circulated an issue paper describing the nine initiatives to permanent missions in New York and also contributed to consultations of the Economic and Social Council on the Outcome of the Conference.

12. In moving forward, CEB has focused on ensuring effective country-level implementation of the Joint Crisis Initiatives through the mechanism of the United Nations Development Group. The nine initiatives were decentralized to activities at the country level, coordinated through the lead and cooperating agencies. As part of this effort, the Chair of the United Nations Development Group addressed a letter to relevant resident coordinators on 1 September 2009, noting that the United Nations system's support should be rapid and relevant to the emerging needs of countries and that the Initiatives should inform an integrated country-based approach through which the United Nations system could concretely help countries, including through analysis, identification of gaps and joint action. Supporting the operationalization of the Initiatives, a resources guide summarizing the support available to United Nations country teams under each initiative was also circulated to resident coordinators. The quick handover of the Initiatives from the strategic programme level to implementation in operational activities serves as an example of the enhanced synergies between the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group.

13. The Joint Crisis Initiatives build upon ongoing work of the United Nations system, with particular focus on the crisis-related aspects of the system's response. Their contribution to response measures in developing countries is best measured in terms of the policy frameworks that are being developed. For example, the crisis has led to greater global receptivity to the establishment of a basic social protection floor, heightened recognition of the significance of decent work and the risks of a jobless recovery, as well as the importance of maintaining agricultural production for food security. Countries have taken political measures that include social protection measures, independently from the United Nations system and the Joint Crisis Initiatives. At the outcome of the Pittsburgh Summit, the Group of 20 agreed on measures reflecting those of the global jobs pact, such as training, support to small and medium enterprises and infrastructure investment, and in promoting a job-rich recovery from the crisis. The role of the Initiatives is thus to feed into those processes by advocating for a coordinated and integrated approach and to promote and introduce policy measures, such as those contained in the global jobs pact, in specific countries.

14. There is clear evidence that the goals of the Joint Crisis Initiatives are complementary. For example, the goal of the green economy initiative is underpinned by initiatives on the global jobs pact, the social protection floor, trade and food security. These synergies strengthen the common outlook in the nine

respective areas. There has furthermore been a fundamental shift towards increased reliance at the country level in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the United Nations country teams to ensure an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated approach to the crisis and its aftermath.

15. Although fiscal measures contributed significantly to preventing the deepening of the recession, they do not add up to a sustainable long-term solution. Along with the food security and climate change challenges, the global financial and economic crisis brings with it the risk of rolling back gains and creating obstacles to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The crisis has revealed the internal weaknesses of globalization and the need to address those challenges. In moving forward, CEB has underlined the opportunity that the crisis poses to the international community to take on board lessons learned and develop a fairer, greener and more inclusive globalization. The green economy initiative, which covers the area of the creation of green jobs, sustainable development and growth, poverty reduction and climate change, embraces such an effort and has received wide political support. The Board will pursue its work on this initiative, taking into consideration the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

B. Supporting progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

16. Ten years have passed since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the historical commitment to cut extreme poverty by half through the implementation of eight measurable and time-bound goals. In spite of significant achievements in a number of countries, progress remains uneven, and billions of people still struggle to meet their basic needs. In the lead up to the General Assembly high-level plenary meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2010, CEB has reaffirmed its strong commitment and readiness to scale up the collective efforts of the United Nations system to assist Member States in accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Under the leadership of the Secretary-General, CEB has the conviction that the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved when the appropriate policies and projects, backed by adequate resources, are applied.

17. The threats posed by climate change and the food and global financial and economic crises have only heightened the priority of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. CEB considers it to be of immense value that the forthcoming Summit in 2010 would lead to national recommitments to the Millennium Development Goals. A positive and inclusive outcome would reinforce the wider framework of the internationally agreed development goals as well as the "delivering as one" objective. Organizations of the United Nations system have also stressed the critical importance of the Global Compact on the international dimensions of supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through national development strategies.

18. The United Nations system is working together to accelerate progress to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Under the aegis of UNDG, the United Nations system provided a series of analytical inputs for activities related to the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting. Five in-depth thematic papers on the Millennium Development Goals were produced, providing an analysis of successful

country-level strategies and measures, the factors underpinning success, critical gaps, a summary of key lessons learned, and future measures for accelerated progress. The papers are rich in their analysis of country-level performance on the Millennium Development Goals, emphasizing the recognition of the interdependence of all of the Goals and of the necessity of country-led development strategies, while providing an important resource for encouraging country-level learning on how to improve development performance and accelerate progress. In their independent analysis, the papers emphasize the underlying importance of pro-poor growth and sound macroeconomic policies and recognize other important determinants of future performance.

19. The guidance on country reporting on the Millennium Development Goals was amended to provide each country with the opportunity to undertake deeper analysis and generate country-level evidence on what is needed to achieve the Goals, while addressing new challenges and opportunities. The amendment includes guidance to United Nations country teams, Governments and national stakeholders to understand: (a) progress and trends on each of the Millennium Development Goal targets; (b) inequality in achievement of the Goals; (c) implementation bottlenecks that impede progress on those Goals that remain off track; (d) the impact of the global economic and climate crises on progress in achieving select Millennium Development Goal targets; and (e) examples of good practices that accelerate progress. United Nations country teams are working to support Governments and national stakeholders to prepare Millennium Development Goal country reports for the High-level Plenary Meeting. Evidence from those reports will be used to highlight recurring bottlenecks and suggest what proven initiatives could be scaled up to accelerate progress.

20. In an effort to share knowledge and learn from creative country approaches, a Millennium Development Goal good practices publication has also been produced. More than 200 good practices are included in this catalogue targeting specific constraints and challenges towards achievement of the Goals, which good practices have addressed in various ways. The cases presented are owned by national Governments and/or local populations and are supported by the United Nations, bilateral development agencies, civil society and the private sector. Each case contains unique lessons learned and key elements of success that could be useful for development planners and practitioners.

C. Climate change

21. During the reporting period, the United Nations system has intensified its work on climate change through the CEB Climate Change Action Framework, which was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in 2007. The efforts of the United Nations system leading up to the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in December 2009 demonstrated how organizations of the United Nations system are aligning their diverse areas of expertise and capacity to assist countries in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. CEB issued a statement of purpose (see box below), together with a policy brief, conveying the message of the system's responsiveness to Member States' priority action on adaptation. Side events demonstrating the multisectoral approach of United Nations system organizations to address climate change, along with initiatives for global action, all

demonstrated that the United Nations system, led by CEB, is increasingly delivering as one on this issue.

The United Nations system at the forefront of efforts to address climate change — statement of purpose

Climate change presents the international community with an unprecedented challenge, given the severity and intensity of the anticipated impacts and their global reach. No country or individual will be untouched. The United Nations system stands ready to support the international community in confronting this defining challenge of our times.

Climate change is under way. Scientific observations point to increasingly severe negative impacts in all parts of the world, disproportionately affecting the poor and vulnerable, those who have the weakest capacity for resilience. Their right to healthy, productive and secure lives is increasingly at risk. It is ultimately the human dimension of climate change and the consequences for individuals all over the world that must provide the impetus to action on the scale required. No one country or one actor can confront the immensity of the challenge alone. Climate change requires a concerted global response.

Climate change in all its dimensions must be addressed within the broader context of sustainable development, which includes economic advancement, poverty eradication and environmental protection, elements that are essential to the realization of human rights and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally and nationally agreed goals and aspirations.

It is clear that, as the international community comes together for the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen, what is required is an ambitious agreement that embodies a new global pact and a renewed international commitment to jointly confront the challenge of climate change in the context of sustainable development.

The United Nations system, as the most inclusive multilateral institutional framework for policy and action, has an essential role to play in supporting the international community's efforts to combat climate change, especially those of developing countries. The experience and capacity of United Nations system organizations provide the international community with an important resource in undertaking the multisectoral approach required for mitigation and adaptation. As well as providing the forum for global negotiations on climate change, the system brings together normative, policy and deliberative capacities, scientific and knowledge resources, a global network of country and regional offices, and expertise in key climate-relevant sectors. These sectors include agriculture and fisheries, food security, water security, disaster risk reduction, ecosystem management, education, employment and decent work, energy (including renewables), technology transfer, finance, forestry, health, human settlements, industry, information and

communications technologies and services, oceans, tourism, trade and transport, as well as the cross-cutting issues of human rights, gender equality, population dynamics, migration, forced displacement and statelessness.

The United Nations system organizations are committed to responding to the challenge of climate change by delivering as one at the global, regional and country levels on the basis of their convening and advocacy roles, normative and analytical expertise, and operational and coordination capabilities. The United Nations system stands ready to provide advice on optimal policy choices, mobilize multi-stakeholder partnerships and otherwise support countries prepare for and implement large-scale climate actions, build the necessary capacity, disseminate relevant technologies and channel the additional financial resources and investments required to meet climate goals and responsibilities in a coordinated, effective and coherent manner.

Scaled-up, predictable and additional finance will be essential in mobilizing global action to address climate change. Mechanisms to channel these funds must respond directly to country needs, within a transparent, fair and efficient governance framework. Provision of policy and technical support for the use of such funds is equally critical. The United Nations system possesses tried and tested mechanisms, including multi-donor trust funds administered by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank Group's investment funds, which can be built upon. Given the magnitude and complexity of the response needed, it is essential that any new framework makes full use of United Nations system channels and promotes cooperation among them and other mechanisms in responding to country demands.

The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, a body that, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, brings together the leaders of all the multilateral institutions that comprise the United Nations system, has elaborated a framework for action based on the principles of the ongoing climate negotiations. In this context, a number of ambitious, concrete and actionable initiatives have been developed, bringing the diversity of the United Nations system's capacities together and providing an effective support platform for the efforts of countries to address climate change both through domestic action and international cooperation.

The United Nations system is committed to supporting Member States in implementing current and future international agreements by further aligning the strengths of its organizations, developing clear targeted and accessible support activities and programmes, and enhancing transparency and accountability in its operations. It is determined to strengthen its collaborative work, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, for green, fair and sustainable development for all, building on the expected outcome of Copenhagen and the outcomes of other major United Nations conferences and summits.

22. CEB confirmed at its session in April 2010 that it would continue its efforts on climate change, including through the High-level Committee on Programmes Working Group on Climate Change and the United Nations Development Group Task Team, and support the international community in implementing international agreements. The interconnectedness between addressing the impact of climate change and achieving the Millennium Development Goals is clear. Achieving the Goals will also contribute to strengthening the capacities needed to tackle climate change. CEB will pursue opportunities to contribute to the processes leading up to the sixteenth Conference of the Parties in Cancun, Mexico, as well as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. It will also seek to provide the necessary input of technical expertise to the Secretary-General's newly established High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing as well as the High-level Panel under the Copenhagen Accord.

23. In parallel with providing the needed input to the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations, the work of the United Nations system to jointly address climate change continues with implementation of joint operational activities at the regional and country levels. During the reporting period, three guidance notes were sent to United Nations country teams as part of the effort to ensure an effective response to assist Member States in preparing and implementing coherent and balanced development policies to confront climate change and related issues of disasters and environmental degradation as part of economic growth and poverty eradication. The notes focus on how to incorporate actions that address risks and opportunities related to climate change, environmental sustainability and disaster risk reduction into their country analysis and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

D. Security and safety of staff

24. In the face of a rapidly changing world and rising global vulnerability, the United Nations system needs to have in place the most flexible and efficient management systems possible to continue to deliver on its mandates. CEB, through its High-level Committee on Management, has therefore, during the reporting period, continued its work to develop a more effective United Nations security management system in the context of serious emerging challenges to security and safety. The Committee conducted a comprehensive review of safety and security procedures applicable to international staff, national staff and non-staff personnel in order to identify best practices and compare the Organization's procedures with those of other international institutions. Information brochures on security-related entitlements and benefits were completed for all categories of staff and distributed to CEB member organizations in December 2009. A rapid response team mechanism to support country offices in the event of a crisis was also approved. This team will consist of administrative personnel who will be deployed to help United Nations staff members and their families understand entitlements and process claims.

25. In early 2009, CEB issued a statement on the safety and security of United Nations system staff which endorsed the shift in culture and mindset from a "when to leave" to a "how to stay" approach and set out the actions which the Board would take with regard to staff safety and security. In addition, an Executive Group on

Security was set up to support the rapid response capacity of the Department of Safety and Security.

26. The Committee also approved the revised Field Security Handbook and a revised framework for accountability for the security management system, which is instrumental in supporting both the decision-making process for senior managers and the change to a culture of managerial responsibility. Another cornerstone of the United Nations security management system is the new Security Risk Management model, which includes the assessment of programme criticality to allow for assessment of risks and weighing them against programmatic needs. The new model focuses on risk analysis as opposed to risk avoidance.

27. Another critical element in this area was the adoption by CEB of a new Security Level System, in which country- and area-based security and mitigating measures are determined on the basis of a multilevel security risk assessment. The new system, which provides a sound method for rating threats, fosters collaboration at all levels to determine appropriate mitigating measures and promotes transparency and consultation with host Governments. Pilot testing was very successful, and the new system was welcomed by security experts at all levels. Full implementation of the Security Level System is scheduled to commence on 1 January 2011.

E. Harmonization of business practices

28. CEB continues to lead the efforts towards the simplification and harmonization of business practices. The endorsement in the third quarter of 2007 of the High-level Committee on Management plan of action for the harmonization of business practices in the United Nations system, and the launch in October 2008 of a campaign to raise funds to implement the Plan marked a significant shift from ad hoc to systematic pursuit of coherent working modalities in the United Nations system. The plan of action reflects broad-based consensus on key bottlenecks, encompassing areas with great potential for adopting harmonized management practices of the highest global standards. The overarching objective of the plan of action is to increase the ability of the organizations of the United Nations system to deliver better programmatic results through increased coherence in their working modalities.

29. In its resolution 2009/1 on "Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", adopted on 22 July 2009, the Economic and Social Council acknowledged that progress was being achieved, but that many procedures required further harmonization.

30. The Plan of Action was expected to be financed largely through extrabudgetary funding, as there are limited resources available from the regular budget for system-wide activities. Once the feasibility studies and pilot work are completed, follow-up action would be mainstreamed into the work of the United Nations system organizations. Member States have committed growing financial support for the plan of action. The original funding proposal was submitted to 54 potential donors, soliciting contributions in support of project implementation. Following an initial contribution from New Zealand in 2008, in late 2009 and early 2010 additional contributions from Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of

Great Britain and Northern Ireland were received, taking the Plan from the planning to the implementation stage. On 11 February 2010, the High-level Committee on Management Steering Committee for Harmonization of Business Practices approved fund allocations of $3.2 million to six priority projects.[2] Lead agencies for the projects currently include the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Additional allocations will be decided on over the next few months. Most projects will be executed over the next two years, with meaningful milestones already by end of 2010.

31. The Economic and Social Council discussed the simplification and harmonization of business practices at its operational activities segment in July 2009. In its resolution 2009/1, the Council acknowledged that progress was being achieved and noted that many procedures would require further harmonization, as identified in the plan of action.

32. More recently, in its resolution 63/311 on system-wide coherence, the General Assembly called on the Secretary-General, in cooperation with members of CEB, to continue progress in the simplification and harmonization of business practices within the United Nations development system, and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with CEB, to regularly inform the Economic and Social Council about progress being made and challenges encountered in this regard and to refer any matter requiring an intergovernmental decision to the relevant intergovernmental bodies.

33. In response to the continuing calls from Member States for further simplification and harmonization of business practices, both in the context of the triennial comprehensive policy review and the General Assembly discussions and resolutions on system-wide coherence, a joint High-level Committee on Management-United Nations Development Group high-level mission to identify and address remaining country-level bottlenecks in business practices was undertaken to Malawi, Mozambique and Viet Nam in March and April 2010, with a visit to Albania to be conducted later this year. The mission built on the continuing efforts of the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management to collaborate on bringing to scale at the country level the solutions and innovations that make a tangible difference for harmonized business operations at the country level. Adoption and implementation of the recommendations from this mission are expected to lead to more effective business operations at the country level.

34. In cooperation with the High-level Committee on Management, the United Nations Development Group developed generic guidance on common procurement

[2] The six priority projects are: (a) comparative analysis and review of the human resources policies, practices and procedures of the organizations of the United Nations system, with particular attention to employment arrangements of staff in non-Headquarters duty stations; (b) feasibility study for putting in place Common Treasury Services; (c) United Nations system-wide financial statistics database and reporting system; (d) common standards costing approaches for information and communications technology services and investments; (e) vendor eligibility project: development of a common framework on vendor sanctions for the United Nations system; and (f) procurement harmonization in support of field operations: comparative analysis of organizations' procurement practices and processes.

for global use and a global application on how to plan for and develop a common information and communications technology infrastructure across agencies at the country level.

F. United Nations development system working together

35. During the reporting period, the management and accountability system of the United Nations development and resident coordinator system, including the functional firewall of the resident coordinator system, started its implementation. There are indications that the key guidance and operational tools put in place during 2008 are leading to positive results at the country level. Progress has been reported in a number of areas to further deepen the principle of mutual accountability in the delivery of development results. A comprehensive review of the implementation of the management and accountability system will take place in 2010.

36. In order to support United Nations country teams in ensuring the best quality of United Nations Development Assistant Frameworks to support national development priorities, the United Nations Development Group endorsed a new package of guidance for the frameworks. In several countries, the development process and implementation of the framework has allowed for partnerships with new actors. For example, as part of the framework development process in Swaziland, a United Nations Civil Society Advisory Committee was formed in 2009 to effectively capture civil society inputs in the development of the United Nations Development Assistant Frameworks 2011-2015. The new guidance package offers United Nations country teams greater flexibility, and it allows for closer alignment with national planning processes. It includes a standard operational format for reporting, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/208 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/1. The "Standard Operational Format and Guidance for Reporting Progress on the United Nations Development Assistant Frameworks" sets the minimum standard for country teams to report on progress and supports stronger mutual accountability between the United Nations and national authorities. The new guidance draws from lessons learned and best practices from programme countries.

G. Working together in crisis, post-crisis and transition countries

37. In response to a request made by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee on 23 July 2008, recommendations were developed for enhanced capacity of resident coordinators in crisis and post-crisis countries. These recommendations were approved by the United Nations Development Group on 2 June 2009 and by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee on 1 December 2009. During the reporting period, several million dollars were raised for this initiative, and the first allocations were made in early 2010 to seven countries. The purpose of this enhanced capacity is to ensure coordination, strategic planning and programming in critical recovery areas, including at the subnational level. To help multidimensional United Nations field presences establish improved coordination structures and develop strategic frameworks, the United Nations Development Group, in collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs, organized a system-wide training session on the integrated mission planning process and strategic planning for over 100 planning officers in United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions and resident coordinator offices during

the reporting period. In addition, UNDG assisted in the development of the integrated mission planning process guidelines, was engaged in the development of the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, and supported the rollout of integrated strategic frameworks in several crisis and post-crisis countries. The revised toolkit for the post-conflict needs assessment was launched, and a training programme for post-conflict needs assessment practitioners was designed.

III. Other significant issues on the agenda of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2009/10

A. System-wide coherence

38. General Assembly resolution 63/311 on system-wide coherence covers a number of areas of significance for the ongoing work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its three Committees. The Board's work to enhance harmonization of business practices is, in this regard, expected to have a significant impact on streamlining administrative practices of United Nations system organizations, thereby helping ease the administrative burden on programmes. The repository of United Nations system information, especially financial data, which is being developed by the CEB secretariat, will further provide a reliable system for tracking the flow, allocation and utilization of resources in the system. As concerns system-wide evaluation, the Board has addressed the lacuna of an independent standing capacity for system-wide evaluations, and discussions are currently ongoing with the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Joint Inspection Unit on the creation of such a framework. On a number of occasions, CEB, represented by the Director of its secretariat, briefed Member States on its work in these areas to support Member States in the ongoing consultations.

B. Enhancing the contribution of the United Nations system to the Economic and Social Council

39. The organizations of the United Nations system work together within the context of the mandates provided to them by Member States and under the direct oversight of their respective governing bodies. CEB and its three pillars aim to ensure overall coherence in the efforts by United Nations system organizations to collectively respond to intergovernmental mandates and system-wide challenges. The Board agrees on the importance of ensuring timely and open sharing of information and regularly reports to the Economic and Social Council on its collaborative work, for example, through the present annual overview report.

40. Recent efforts by the United Nations system to strengthen its engagement in the work of the Economic and Social Council include two panel discussions during the coordination segment of the substantive session of the Council in 2009 on: (a) the role of the United Nations system in sustainable development, highlighting the food and energy crises and climate change; and (b) the impact of the financial crisis on sustainable development, including its social consequences. During the reporting period, Member States have been updated on the progress made under the Joint Crisis Initiatives. The CEB issues paper on the Joint Crisis

Initiatives was distributed at a panel discussion on the crisis in the Economic and Social Council on 22 April 2009. In pursuance of its decision 2009/258 on the follow-up to paragraph 56 of the outcome document of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, the Economic and Social Council held informal consultations on 19 October 2009 to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the nine Joint Crisis Initiatives of CEB, "The promotion and enhancement of a coordinated response of the United Nations development system and the specialized agencies in the follow-up to and implementation of the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development" (E/2009/114).The secretary of CEB briefed delegations at the consultations, and Member States shared their views on the report and on how to move forward with the United Nations response.

C. Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

41. In response to General Assembly resolution 63/230 on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), a time-bound inter-agency cluster group was set up by the High-level Committee on Programmes in 2008. To enhance the coherence of United Nations system-wide activities in the areas of employment and decent work in the context of poverty eradication, the group prepared a plan of action, which was endorsed by the Committee in 2009. The plan builds on the platform already developed in support of the CEB toolkit for mainstreaming employment and decent work, as well as the work undertaken through the Joint Crisis Initiatives on the global jobs pact and the social protection floor.

42. In support of efforts by Member States, the plan of action has been developed around the following four activities: (a) awareness-raising about employment and decent work as an effective development strategy for poverty eradication; (b) strengthening capacity-building; (c) providing support in integrating decent work towards poverty eradication into national and international policies and programmes; and (d) sharing good practices in promoting employment and decent work at the national and international level. The United Nations system continues to advance its work on full employment and decent work as a means to eradicate poverty through the cluster group by sharing country-level experiences among United Nations organizations and engaging in dialogue with Member States and civil society on the issue. As anticipated in the decision of the High-level Committee on Programmes, the cluster group has also met to share examples and applications related to the global jobs pact.

D. Science and technology

43. CEB member organizations reviewed how the United Nations system can best respond to the international attention to science and technology transfer, as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (see resolution 55/2) and the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (see General Assembly resolution 62/208). This work is being taken forward by the United Nations Group

on the Information Society, in close collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. An exercise was launched during the reporting period to obtain baseline data on the work of selected United Nations system organizations in facilitating access of programme countries to new and emerging technologies. The survey consists of a mapping and categorization of current and recent United Nations system activities in the field of technological capacity development.

E. Support to staff in emergency situations

44. CEB has emphasized the need to concretize the discussions and deliberations on the United Nations system's ability to protect its staff — national, international and non-staff personnel — with the lessons learned from the earthquake in Haiti. Furthermore, it has stressed the need to adequately compensate staff and/or their families in the event of service-incurred injuries, illness or death, resulting from both malicious acts and natural events.

45. A key lesson emerging from the tragic experience in Haiti is that policies should be in place to deal with emergency situations, ranging from human resources and capacity-building to the procurement, logistics, travel, communications and financial areas. At present, the Secretariat does not have arrangements in place to ensure systemic emergency preparedness and support either for those who perish, are injured or otherwise affected by such emergencies, or for their families. An emergency response team would be needed to deal with these kinds of situations, and the Secretary-General has proposed that a dedicated emergency preparedness and support unit be established in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. This unit would work closely with the Secretariat departments and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes that provide direct and immediate support on the ground and at Headquarters.

F. Human resources

46. During the reporting period, the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management made progress on a number of areas. The review of the mandatory age of separation in the United Nations common system was completed, and the Network presented the document to the International Civil Service Commission at its sixty-ninth session, in July 2009, with a proposal to increase the mandatory age of separation to 62 for those staff members with an entry on duty date prior to 1 January 1990. The exit interview questionnaire for all staff departing the organizations was launched in July 2009. The Network also developed a number of security-related initiatives. This included three separate information brochures on security-related entitlements and benefits for all categories of staff and a proposal for rapid response personnel as part of an immediate crisis response to ensure that the entitlements of affected staff members and/or their families are facilitated. Work continued on other security-related proposals, such as the comparative review on service-incurred compensation, improving security-related measures for national staff and the review of Appendix D. During the reporting period, the Staff Stress Counsellor's Group was integrated as part of the Human Resources Network. The Network also participated in a number of International Civil Service Commission working groups, such as the review of the mobility and hardship scheme, the review

of the General Service salary survey methodologies and the reform of the General Service job classification.

G. International Public Sector Accounting Standards

47. During the reporting period, system-wide support towards implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) had brought important activities to fruition. In particular, an 18-course training suite has been completed and made available to United Nations system organizations, some of which have already started to deliver courses based on the materials provided. A set of 60 accounting papers — policies and guidance — was completed in 2009 resulting in all major IPSAS policies issues now being covered by relevant system-wide guidance intended to promote the highest possible level of harmonization in interpretation and application of IPSAS. This set will now be updated and maintained to reflect future developments related to IPSAS. The most important outcome of this project is the number of organizations successfully implementing IPSAS. In 2009, WFP obtained a clean audit opinion on its first set of financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2008. The system-wide IPSAS team worked in this period to codify and transfer to the other organizations of the system the most important lessons learned in terms of approach to implementation issues and dialogue with external auditors. As many as 10 organizations are expected to implement IPSAS by 2010, while the majority of the remaining organizations will implement by 2012.

H. Financial management

48. In the context of the Plan of Action for Harmonization of Business Practices the Finance and Budget Network's Working Group on Common Treasury Services had launched its activities. The Working Group set up a web-based knowledge-sharing tool allowing inter-agency discussions on technical treasury-related subjects in its online forum. Preliminary steps have been taken to start the next phase of the group's activities — a feasibility study to evaluate the potential harmonization opportunities in the treasury area. This phase was initiated following the decision taken in February 2010 by the Business Practices Steering Committee to approve funding allocation to two priority financial management initiatives: the feasibility study for putting in place Common Treasury Services and the United Nations system-wide financial statistics database and reporting system. Implementation of the second initiative commenced in the second quarter of 2010 by the CEB secretariat.

I. Procurement

49. In April 2008, the Procurement Network submitted to the High-level Committee on Management a funding proposal as part of the plan of action for the harmonization of business practices in the United Nations system. Funding was received in August 2009 to develop a common policy framework for the sanctioning of unethical vendors. The framework includes mechanisms for information sharing, individual organization decision-making and decision recording. The final version

of the proposed framework is expected to be delivered following review, endorsement and validation by the Procurement Network and the Legal Network by the end of 2010. The United Nations Development Programme is the lead agency for this initiative.

50. The Procurement Network, in close coordination with the United Nations Development Group, has made progress in collecting and preparing a comprehensive overview of the procurement manuals of relevant United Nations system organizations. This work is considered essential in supporting the implementation of the "Guidelines for harmonized United Nations procurement at the country level". With the approval of a proposal to draw up a document on the harmonization of the procurement process and practices in support of field operations, work is expected to be accelerated to develop uniform tools for United Nations procurement practitioners based on insight gained from experience at the country level and documenting outcomes and best practices in support of country operations. The Procurement Network has developed a strong and effective cooperation with the United Nations Development Group's Task Team on Common Services and Procurement to ensure coordination of efforts.

51. With the focus on procurement at the country level, the United Nations Global Marketplace now also provides functionality to country offices to upload and maintain rosters of local suppliers and share long-term arrangements to increase access of developing country support to United Nations procurement.

52. Under the guidance and coordination of the Working Group on Supplier Access, 1,639 potential suppliers in 24 developing countries or countries with economies in transition were reached through business seminars. The contents of the training is focused on general information about the United Nations as a potential market, how to find information about business opportunities and insight into the process of public procurement based on the principles underlying United Nations procurement. Practical guidance in how to register as a potential supplier to the Organization forms an integral part of the seminars. Similar events have taken place in 22 countries.

J. Information and communications technology

53. The United Nations system took further steps to enhance operational coherence in the area of information and communications technology by building on past projects and charting new territory. Building on the successful pilot of a United Nations system global contact directory, this system became operational during the reporting period, with organizations joining to make their contact information available using the jointly managed secure and sustainable platform. In addition, the United Nations system concluded a study on the value and feasibility of joint data communications services, which revealed significant opportunities to achieve increased effectiveness through shared global communications services. Also during the period, agencies of the United Nations system, recognizing the current reality in the area of cybersecurity, has begun working on joint programmes in the areas of information security awareness and cybersecurity incident response, as well as common information security policies and practices that agencies can adopt. Finally, the Information and Communications Technology Network of the CEB has begun, through the High-level Committee on Management plan of action for the

harmonization of business practices in the United Nations system, to implement its system-wide project to establish the common costing elements of information and communications technology, which will be used to benchmark information and communications technology services by agencies.

K. Collaboration with the Joint Inspection Unit

54. As has been the case in previous years, CEB engaged in comprehensive exercise to assist the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) with the identification of relevant topics of system-wide impact for the Unit's programme of work. CEB member organizations further provided comments on several of the Unit's reports during the reporting period, including the JIU report entitled "Towards more coherent United Nations system support to Africa" (JIU/REP/2009/5). This report evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing system-wide cooperation framework. The report draws on and shares lessons learned, as well as identifying best coordination practices and methods of collaboration with regards to the United Nations system support to Africa. The United Nations system entities were generally supportive of the main recommendations that the JIU presented in its report, including the need for better alignment of United Nations programmes and planning to national priorities, and enhanced coordination between international and national development partners as well as among United Nations agencies themselves.

IV. Looking ahead

55. During the reporting period, CEB and its three pillars have made advances in the coordination and coherence of the United Nations system on system-wide issues. The Board also devoted increasing attention to operational issues at the country level and to alignment of the work of the United Nations system at the global, regional and country levels. In the period ahead, the Board will continue its ongoing efforts to promote enhanced coordination and coherence within the United Nations system, building on the solid foundation that it has already laid, for effective support to Member States.

56. The work of CEB in 2010/11 is expected to be framed by upcoming events, such as the High-level Meeting to Review Progress on the Millennium Development Goals (20-22 September 2010), the International Year of Biodiversity 2010, the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (29 November-10 December 2010), the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (2011), and preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) (2012).